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House of Representatives

The House met at noon and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. MESSER).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
March 4, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable LUKE MESSER to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 1:50 p.m.

UNFUNDED MANDATES INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, every year Washington imposes thousands of pages of rules and regulations on small businesses and local governments across this country. Hidden in those pages are costly mandates that make it harder for companies to hire and for cash-strapped States, counties, and cities to keep streets clean and parks safe.

Republicans and Democrats alike agree that each regulation the Federal Government dictates should be deliberative and economically defensible. That is why I've banded together with Democrats LORETTA SANCHEZ, MIKE MCINTYRE, and COLLIN PETERSON and Republican JAMES LANKFORD to introduce H.R. 899, the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act. This legislation will ensure a public and bureaucratic awareness about the cost, in dollars and in jobs, that Federal dictates pose to the economy and to local governments.

There is precedent for bipartisanship on this issue. In 1995, Members from both parties got behind, and President Clinton signed, the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA), which sought to expose Washington's abuse of unfunded Federal mandates. By forcing the Federal Government to estimate how much its mandates would cost local governments and employers, regulation would necessarily become better and more efficient for everyone involved. And it has, to a certain extent.

But over the years, weaknesses in the original legislation have been revealed, weaknesses that some government agencies and independent regulatory bodies have exploited. The Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act will correct these oversights and put some weight behind UMRA to ensure no government body, purposely or accidentally, skirts public scrutiny when jobs and scarce resources are at stake.

The spirit of the Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act and its underlying principle, that the American people would be better served by a government that regulates only with the best information, is truly bipartisan.

Lawmakers and unelected regulators should know the price of their dictates. So, too, should the people, private enterprises, and governments, all of whom are being asked to foot the bill.

Funds are very tight for families across this country. Millions of Americans remain unemployed, and many more still rely on small businesses and local governments for jobs, health care, public safety, and education. Washington should think carefully before it decrees mandates that could siphon from the limited dollars governments and private sector job creators use to keep people employed and localities functioning. But as loopholes within the original UMRA legislation have revealed, Federal mandates are not universally preceded by thoughtfulness. The Unfunded Mandates Information and Transparency Act we have introduced will require that from government.

DOING OUR BUSINESS DIFFERENTLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. What's so maddening about the sequester drama, just like the earlier fiscal cliff drama and the looming government shutdown drama, is that it is hopelessly beside the point.

The path to fiscal sustainability is not merely cutting budgets, raising tax rates, or closing a few loopholes. It is about fundamentally doing business differently.

Health care costs demand that we accelerate health care reform, which we're already working on in Oregon and in a number of other communities and health care systems across the country. These reforms, if put into effect nationally, would save more in health care costs over the next 10 years than the entire \$1.2 trillion sequester.

Everybody is getting excited about across-the-board cuts in the Department of Defense, but no one is talking about how we fundamentally change

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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